

## West Virginia Influenza Summary, Week Ending January 12, 2013 (MMWR Week 2)

Dear Influenza Partners,

West Virginia has reported influenza activity as “**Widespread**” for MMWR week 2 (week ending Saturday, January 12, 2013).

West Virginia is currently seeing a moderately severe season of influenza. Influenza-like illness (ILI) activity is comparable to previous seasons of 2007-08 and 2003-04. The proportion of outpatient visits for ILI was at 4.2%. This is the 5<sup>th</sup> consecutive week that ILI was above the state baseline of 2.2%. In the past 10 seasons ILI was above baseline on average 12 consecutive weeks. Influenza AH3 remains the prominent strain seen in West Virginia. Persons aged 65 years of age and older have felt the worst effects of this year’s influenza season, with nearly 95% of all hospitalizations associated to influenza affecting this population. There have been no pediatric influenza associated deaths reported in West Virginia. There have been some localized reports of antiviral shortages; however there is no national antiviral shortage. Clinicians and facilities are encouraged to seek alternate resources to obtain antivirals for treatment and chemoprophylaxis.

Nationally influenza activity remains elevated. The season is shaping up to be worse than average. The US is currently above epidemic threshold for Pneumonia/Influenza associated mortality. More than 90 percent of the deaths have been seniors and the hospital rate for seniors with confirmed flu cases was up sharply over the past week to 82 per 100,000. As of Week 2 there have been a total of 29 pediatric influenza associated deaths reported in the US. Current predictions are that the US as a whole is at the midpoint of the influenza season.

Spot shortages of vaccine have been reported. To find where you can get flu vaccine in your area, go to [www.flu.gov](http://www.flu.gov) where there is an interactive search tool.

Although the influenza vaccine is not a perfect tool, it is still the best protection against getting the flu. In addition, the influenza vaccine has been shown to offer substantial other benefits including, reducing illness, antibiotic use, time lost from work, hospitalizations, and deaths. For anyone 6 months of age and older who has not gotten vaccinated yet this season should get vaccinated.

Weekly influenza surveillance graphs for West Virginia can be found at the website: <http://www.dhhr.wv.gov/oeps/disease/flu/Pages/fluSurveillance.aspx>. Because of late reporting, we must sometimes update information in retrospect. The website will always have the most up-to-date numbers. Please feel free to contact us at (304)-558-5358, extension 1, with any questions regarding this report.